

Dear Colleague:

This week, H.R. 4844, the Federal Election Integrity Act of 2006, will be considered on the House Floor. This important bill puts voter identification requirements in place that are needed to preserve the integrity of the elections process. The absence of meaningful ID requirements in many states leaves our voting process vulnerable to fraud, and allows legal votes to be cancelled out by illegally cast ballots.

Under H.R. 4844, voters will be required to provide a photo ID in the 2008 elections. The bill also requires that by 2010, voters wishing to vote in a federal election must present a photo ID that demonstrates that they are citizens. States are also required to set up programs to distribute the IDs and must provide them at no cost to indigent voters. The cost for the program will be reimbursed by the federal government.

There is broad bi-partisan support for this simple common sense reform. In a report issued last year, the Commission on Federal Election Reform, co-chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker recommended a national voter ID requirement along the lines of the provisions of H.R. 4844. Outside of Washington, large majorities of the American public recognize the need for this basic voting system protection. A recent NBC/Wall Street Journal poll showed that 81% of those surveyed favored an ID requirement for voting. A recent Rasmussen Reports poll also revealed that 77% of likely voters across the country agree that displaying a photo ID should be required to cast a vote. These numbers show the wide support this issue enjoys in the country.

By enacting this bill we can help restore confidence in our system and thereby encourage participation. States that have implemented requirements similar to those of H.R. 4844 have experienced the positive effects. Testimony in Phoenix, Arizona revealed that

registration **went up 15%** after a referendum passed which required voters to prove citizenship when registering to vote. The fact is that people are encouraged to vote when they believe that their vote will count, and will not be cancelled out by an illegal vote.

Some Members say that the ID requirement is too much trouble. But everyday millions of Americans show a picture ID to pay by check, board a plane, or buy alcohol or tobacco. Surely the sanctity of the ballot warrants as much protection as these other activities. The right of all citizens to choose their elected officials is too important to rely on an “honor system.” □ □ Requiring people to show an ID to prove their citizenship and eligibility will protect the vote, and help restore confidence in our system. □ We strongly urge you to vote “yes” on H.R. 4844.